

Information Warriors Train Aboard USS Tarawa

By Photographers Mate 3rd Class Tony Spiker

Aboard USS TARAWA in port in San Diego, Calif., Information Professional (IP) Officers, in charge of Navy communications and computer systems at shore facilities and on board ships, normally depend on PowerPoint presentations to facilitate training under Job Qualification Requirements and Personnel Qualification Standards (JQR PQS).

While the information is thoroughly covered, actually being aboard a combat C4I (command, control, communications, computers and intelligence) platform with hands-on training beats classroom work any day.

The amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1) recently opened its doors to officers completing their qualifications training for them to experience firsthand what their futures as IP warriors will entail. This is the first time tours such as these have been organized for IP officers.

Tarawa's Combat Officer, Cmdr. Alan Kolackovsky made his department available, allowing the IP officers access to equipment they will eventually be working with in the fleet. Here, they gained valuable firsthand knowledge of the job that awaits them once they complete their JQR PQS and certification boards.

"There is a big difference from reading about something on a computer screen and actually working with it and making a visual connection to the device," said Lt. Oscar Simmons, visiting IP officer. "Actually seeing what happens on a ship this size, puts me a step ahead of where I would be without this training."

Many of the officers on the tour had been stationed at shore facilities at clear-cut jobs.

"On shore you deal with fixed communications systems like phone lines and satellite systems. But at sea, aboard a moving platform, things become much more complicated very quickly," said Information Systems Technician Second Class John Shawbell, the tour coordinator.



IT2 John Shawbell explains shipboard communications systems to Capt. Scot Miller, Director, Assessment and Experimentation, Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, and other Information Professional Officers, aboard USS Tarawa (LHA 1) April 26th. U.S. Navy Photo by Photographers Mate Third Class Tony Spiker.

Many of the IP officers were lateral transfers from other communities such as pilots whose aircraft have been discontinued from service.

Cmdr. Patrick Owens, former S-3 Viking flight officer, said he wanted to stay in the Navy. Since his aircraft are being phased out for Navy use, he switched to the IPO community since there is an emphasis on technology and communications. "This training visit and being able to work with the nuts and bolts of the job will really help me succeed at my next command," Owens said.

Because of their visit these IP officers have a much stronger knowledge base which will definitely help both them and their community as a whole.

Capt. Scot Miller, an IPO and director of Assessment and Experimentation at Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command said, "Getting the IPO community out to sea will help the community as a whole succeed. Tours like this one keep our officers operationally aware, which



IT2 Izaak Cook and Capt. Scot Miller aboard USS Tarawa. U.S. Navy Photo by Photographers Mate Third Class Tony Spiker.

will help them advance in their careers."

The true measure of success and benefit gained by these programs will not become evident until these IP officers pass their boards and transfer their professional knowledge and C4I skills to the fleet.

For more information contact the public affairs office by e-mail at PAO@Tarawa.navy.mil.
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